

# Harpswell Historical Society

## Newsletter

Summer 2012

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*The Harpswell Historical Society is dedicated to the discovery, identification, collection, preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of materials relating to the history of Harpswell and its people.*

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### The Town Dock

*by Ruth Weeks*

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the land where the Town Dock is now the most prominent fixture was comprised of a row of businesses, including an ice cream parlor, a post office, a livery stable, the steamboat wharf and stores. In fact it was the busiest commercial section on the Neck.

In the 1920's a few summer residents felt a yacht club was needed and proceeded to build a ramp with a float attached. There was originally a clubhouse at the end of the walkway.

(See our website: <http://www.harpowell-historical.org/history/hnyc/hnyc.htm>)

In July 1948 Ed Randall, the owner of the store to the north of the dock, bought the Harpswell Yacht Club property. He ran a gasoline line down the dock to provide service to motor boats. The Town provided upkeep of the dock so as to make it available for public use. Boaters left the oars to their skiffs under the store so they would not have to cart them from home every time they needed them.

In 1952 the steamboat which brought the mail and freight from

*Continued on p. 7*

### Harpswell Women Writers at Annual Meeting on August 22.

The Historical Society's annual meeting is slated for 7:00 pm on August 22 at Centennial Hall. Following a brief business meeting, Cundy's Harbor professor and historian Karin Woodruff Jackson will speak on Harpswell Women Writers. She will focus on images and impressions of Harpswell in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Pearl of Orr's Island*, Marie Peary's *The Snowbaby's Own Story* (partly about Eagle Island), and Edna St Vincent Millay's poem *Ragged Island*. Actress and West Harpswell native Beth Dunlap Muldoon will do readings from the various works. Both members and nonmembers are welcome to attend the meeting and presentation.

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## What's in the Historical Society Archives?

The HHS archives hold many important town documents and records dating back to before the Revolution. Stored in our alarmed, humidity-controlled, and fire-protected, vault, they reveal fascinating glimpses of Harpswell's past. Among them is the original copy of the petition to build what is now known as the Old Town Meeting House at Harpswell Center.

*We the Subscribers Here of Being Assembled  
Do hereby Engage that We Will Provide Good Timber  
Boards Shingles and Clapboards and Nails and  
Glass and Build a Meeting House forty feet  
Long and thirty five feet Wide Eighteen or Nineteen feet studd  
and compleatly finish the out Side of Said meeting  
House and Lay a Good Lower double flower for the  
Worship of God and the service of Mereconeag Neck  
if the Inhabitants of Said Neck will Admitt that  
We Shall Have at our own Disposal All the Ground  
Plot in Said House a Ministerial Pew Except Pulpit Decon Seat three or four  
Seats  
in the Body on Each Side And two Seats in Each Side  
Gallery and Convenient Allie Room in Every Part  
of Said Meeting House the Whole to Builed And Down And  
Compleated At or Before the first Day of October Next Insuring  
the Date Hereof.  
Mereconeag March 28th 1757*

Henry Mc Caus

John Stover

David Curtis

William Alexander Sr.

*(Last line illegible,  
missing)*



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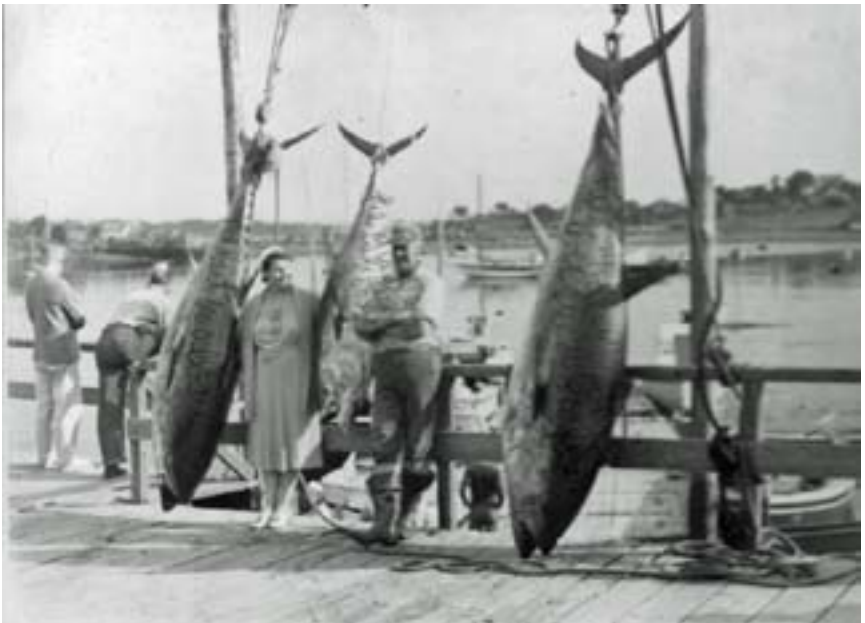
## **Bailey Island Tuna Tournament a 73 Year Old Tradition**

First started in 1939 by the Bailey Island Tuna Club at Mackerel Cove, the tournament took place this year on July 23-27 out of Cook's Lobster House. Elroy Johnson, George Johnson, John Gould and James E. Herrick were among those who conceived and started the Tuna Club, and it won early support from Maine's governor, the President of the State Senate, the Fisheries Commissioner, L.L. Bean, and many others. By 1941 the event had morphed into the Maine Tuna Tournament with state officials in charge. After a brief suspension during WWII, the tournament resumed and by 1969 was run by the new Casco Bay Tuna Club. That year, the tournament home port moved to Cook's Lobster House. It is now known as the Bailey

Island Fishing Tournament. Pictures from the the tournament's earlier years are available at the Historical Society Museum at Harpswell Center

## **Bowdoin Students Donate Time to Historical Society**

Last fall on September 17, a group of Bowdoin students put down their books, donned work clothes, and spent the day repainting the 1820 Old School House located behind Centennial Hall. They volunteered their time as part of Bowdoin's 13th annual Common Good Day program, which allows Bowdoin students, faculty, staff, and alumni to join with community members to learn about local organizations through service. We hope to host the students for work on another project again this September. HHS members are welcome to join the student volunteers on the upcoming project as well.



## New acquisitions on display at the Society's Museum are:

- **Room doors from the Ocean Home boarding house on Look Out Point.** Each door is covered with names of people who stayed at the boarding house beginning in 1889, including including many members of the family of Benjamin F. Davis, who with four brothers later started a shoe factory in Freeport. The Ocean Home still stands and is now a private cottage. Join us at the Museum to explore the graffiti on these doors to see if you can find the name of a relative. For more information on Harpswell's many hotels in the 19th and 20th centuries, we recommend checking out the HHS website ([www.harpswellhistorical.org](http://www.harpswellhistorical.org)) and the research done by Dick Mosely, a copy of which is in the Museum's library. (Donated by Peggy and Jim Lefleur)
- **An 1870s era photo of Captain Elijah Kellogg Green**, who died in 1901. We are looking for more information about Capt Green, who was named after Harpswell's famed preacher. (Donated by Joan Phillips)
- **Memorabilia from Bailey's Store.** Long-time gas boy and helper at Bailey's store, Dustin Slocum, dropped by the Museum recently and regaled us with tales of the regulars and tourists who shopped at Bailey's. Dave Hackett told Dusty a Bailey's Store story of his own. He said that one day, a tourist from out of state drove up to the store in a fancy car as Stanley Merriman was exiting. When the tourist announced that he was looking for Harpswell, Stanley answered, "Good!" and con-

tinued walking. Please write up your own recollections of Bailey's Store for the Museum's archives.

- **A 1775 Brown Bess musket made in England**, test fired in the Tower of London, and used by Major Paul Randell of Harpswell. It seems that Englishman Maj. Randell, whose grave stone is behind the Old Meeting House, married Mary McFarland, daughter of a wealthy Irishman who settled at Maquoit Bay. They purchased a large tract of land where Brunswick is now located. HHS president Dave Hackett wrote more about Maj. Randell's Brown Bess in a recent issue of the Harpswell Anchor.
- **A doll's bed** from the 1800's. (Donated by Bill Locke)

The Museum is open every Sunday from 2:00 - 4:00 pm from Memorial Day to Columbus Day. Members and the public can visit outside those hours by calling 833-6322.

## E-Mail Addresses Wanted

Would you like us to email you future copies of the HHS Newsletters or news of upcoming HHS activities? If so, please send your email address to us at [harpshistory@gmail.com](mailto:harpshistory@gmail.com).

## Board Meetings

All members are welcome to attend both the board meetings and the public meetings. If you wish to attend a board meeting, or have a comment, please contact David Hackett (833-6322), Box 121, Harpswell, 04079.

## Your Society at Work

Recent and Upcoming HHS Events`

- Memorial Day - A great crowd and parade. May 31, 2012`
- Fourth of July 2012 - Angry patriots expound the Declaration of Independence and fire a replica period cannon. July 4, 2012`
- Guided Tour of Town Meeting House Graveyard at Harpswell Center. July 22, 2012`
- Annual Meeting at Centennial Hall and Speaker Event featuring Harpswell Women Writers. August 22, 2012`
- Children's Halloween Event - When those buried behind the Town Meeting House wake up and tell their stories. End of October`
- Vespers at the East Harpswell Baptist Church - Come see this beautiful historic structure now owned by the HHS. December`
- Lighting of the Christmas Tree and Caroling - December`

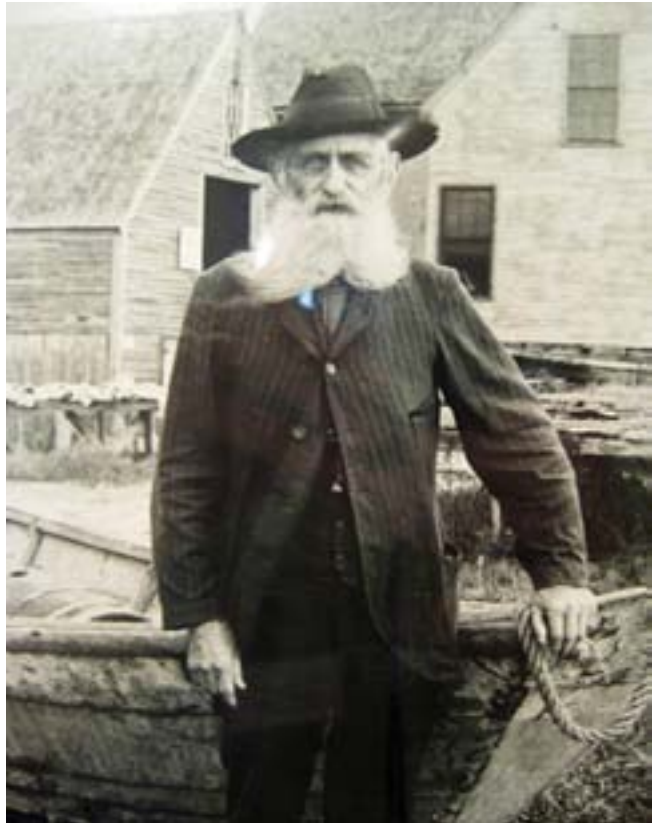
We need your help to continue our free public events and work. To volunteer or share information, please call 833-6322 or drop by the Museum.

Please send your donations of any amount to:`

The Harpswell Historical Society  
929 Harpswell Neck Road  
Harpswell, ME 04079`

## Historical Society Page in the Anchor

Every month for the past year, HSS president Dave Hackett has written a fascinating article about Harpswell's history and traditions on page 4 of the Harpswell Anchor newspaper. Look for it the next time you receive a copy. The Museum has copies of back issues of the Anchor in case you want to read past articles.



*New Acquisition: Captain Elijah Kellogg Green*



*New Acquisition: Each door of this Ocean Home boarding house is covered with names of people who stayed at the boarding house beginning in 1889.*

*The Society would be grateful if you decided to send in your membership or membership renewal dues with this newsletter. You are welcome to use the form below. Many of you have missed several years. We will welcome you back.*

## **Harpswell Historical Society Membership**

Please give whatever amount you feel is appropriate for you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Winter address, if different \_\_\_\_\_

*Your Contribution is tax deductible.*

Please make your check payable to Harpswell Historical Society and mail it to Harpswell Historical Society, 929 Harpswell Neck Road, Harpswell, Maine 04079

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Portland was discontinued, and in 1956 the store was closed.

When Don Coombs bought the store in 1963, Lelia Randall gave the Town a 15 foot strip of land at the head of the dock so that there would always be public access. The store once again closed in 1968.

In 1996 Bill Randall sold the land south of the dock to Bobby Graves. This was deeded to the town in 1997 at a cost of \$25,000. This would ensure public parking for the users of the dock.

Since that time, there have been more and more people using the dock. Boaters are the primary users, both pleasure boaters and lobstermen. At one time Red Cross swimming lessons were given off the dock, and although these have been discontinued, many swimmers still jump off the float even though there is no ladder for easy access. Recreational fishermen spend time casting for whatever fish might be swimming by.

The parking area now not only services the dock, but the many people who walk to the Land Trust property at the end of Potts Point leave their vehicles there. Once in a while vehicles are left overnight by people going to nearby islands. For the last couple of years the Town has mowed the narrow grassy area. People sometimes bring their lawn chairs just to sit by the water to admire the view or spread their blankets for a picnic.

The float is often overcrowded, and the Town is now in the process of adding more float space and a ladder. The dock is one of the amenities that our summer visitors enjoy as much as year round residents.

## **Society's Website is a Hit!**

Our expanding website and its new web address ([www.harpswellhistorical.org](http://www.harpswellhistorical.org)) are a hit! Browse the site on a rainy day. The pages on our site with the most "hits" include:

- Town History
- Early Settlers and Landowners
- Harpswell Historic District
- The Meeting House at Harpswell Center
- Harpswell's 250 Anniversary Celebration
- John Darling
- Sebascodegan Garden Club
- Cundy's Harbor Incident
- Orr's Island
- Orr's Island Bridge and Cribstone Bridge
- Memories of Harpswell Cottages
- The Auburn Colony
- Pictures from the Archives
- Pictures of Historic Harpswell
- Postcards of Harpswell
- Calendar Pictures
- Links to Other Harpswell-related Websites

## **Thanks**

Many thanks to the following people for volunteering on Sundays this summer at the Harpswell Historic Museum: Dave Hackett, Kate Chipman, Paula and Gard Conley, June Phinney, Rob Porter, JoAnn Rogers, Ann Standridge, Hope Tanguay, Eleanor Wilson.

## **Board Members**

Paul Dostie, Dave Hackett, Ed Phinney, Rob Porter, Ann Standridge, Burr Taylor

## **Harpwell Historical Society**

929 Harpswell Neck Road  
Harpwell, Maine 04079  
<http://www.harpwellhistorical.org/>

## **Annual Meeting**

Wednesday, August 22, 2012  
7:00PM at Centennial Hall













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929 Harpswell Neck Road

Harpwell, Maine 04079

<http://www.harpwellhistorical.org/>